

---

## FROM MOTIVATION TO WELL-BEING

---

**SPASOVA Stanislava**

*University of Economics, Varna, Bulgaria*

**Abstract:**

*The concept about motivation is related to human behavior, or in details – to processes that direct human behavior toward attending a certain goal. People are complex creatures. There are a lot of theories explaining human-beings, but we cannot say which of them the right one is. We don't live in "social vacuum". Everything that is happening around us put a mark on our being.*

*A need is a pushing force that directs our behavior. According to Maslow there are five needs which he organized in a pyramid starting with the physiological ones – this is well known as Maslow's need hierarchy. People are established to satisfy first the basic needs and then move to the next step.*

*We have these needs and they are our goals ... but we have to do something to achieve them. This that "switches on" our body into action is motivation. It can be a state of mind; influence of other people or of some material benefits... It's individually for each human-being and that's way it's different to classify it. But one is for sure – rising on a higher levels of motivation leads to higher levels of well – being. That includes healthy body and mind, social outlook that enable a person to function effectively and hold a positive world view.*

**Keywords:** *motivation, human-beings, Maslow, goal, organizations*

Human beings ... there are 6,882,000,000 of them living on the planet Earth! And each of them is unique! Ye, we are all born equal and we all live on the same planet ... but we all grow up in different environment!

From the moment you are born, you start "to explore" this world. With the first breath you take, the first word you say and the first step you make, you take the road of your life. In your early years you go to kindergarten, then to school and after that – university; you start your first job, meet the love of your life; make a family, have children; watch them how they grow up and take the road of their life ... And all these things that happen to you in one or another period of time, reflect on you; put a mark on your survival.

Dimensions of self, regarding to the Hierarchical structure, are:

- Body – the exterior of self that is visible to any perceiver;
- Body language – non-verbal signals that one's body emits (moves, speech, gestures);
- Inner self –thoughts and feelings.

Self is “a constellation of thoughts, feelings and actions”. But as we don’t live in “vacuum” on this planet, we are influenced from everything around us. Or as Maslow said: “Culture is sun, food and water. It’s not the seed; does not create a human being ... only helps what exists in embryo to become real and actual”.

Culture consists of shared values, beliefs, norms and practices of the people of the same geographical area. It reflects a shared totality of the externalized collective selves of the people. It creates the bio-social self of a person.

In addition we have social self – the self defined through group memberships (gender; ethnicity; nationality; etc). We are all social creations and we need one another to thrive – to create families, organizations, political and non-political groups, etc. Furthermore human beings are driven by competency motive for gaining mastery over the environment, which enables them satisfy their striving to feel good about themselves.

People are complicated! And we can say with no doubt that there’s no one strategy or theory that can apply to everyone! Human behavior is complex and it’s affected by biological, social and cultural factors. So it’s really hard job to put people in certain group because you’ll always find an exception to the rule.

We are all human beings and we all have one ultimate goal of life – well-being. That include healthy body and mind, social outlook that enable a person to function effectively and hold a positive world view. The difference comes from the way you take to get to this goal. In other words – motivation!

Motivation is the set of processes that arouse, direct and maintain human behavior toward attending a goal. We have to create a clear idea of what we want to achieve and how we’ll get there. Of course, the goal we settle can be difficult, but attainable. Otherwise, if the goal is too high to realize, we can lose our motivation.

Is there any formula for motivation?!? Maybe! Yes! But it’s not only one and it’s not that simple! There is a complex array of forces managing the direction of each person, but trying to identify and study them it’s a really hard job.

The most powerful motivating force in human-beings is the aspiration toward benevolent and spiritual goals. Regarding to Maslow, people will always pursue the highest and most idealistic aims – self-actualization.

Maslow described a hierarchy of needs starting with our most basic needs for survival and rising to the ultimate – self-actualization. As needs are met they no longer act as a motivator and the dominant motivator is to be found at the next level. Let’s see what actually is Maslow’s hierarchy of needs. It is often portrayed in the shape of a pyramid, with the largest and most fundamental levels of needs at the bottom, and the need for self-actualization at the top:

- Physiological needs – they are the literal requirements for human survival. If these requirements are not met, the human body simply cannot continue to function. Here is included satisfaction of hunger, thirst, sleep, sex.
- Safety and security needs – personal and financial security.

- Affiliation – humans need to feel a sense of belonging and acceptance; to love and be loved by others. This aspect involves emotionally based relationships, such as friendship, family, social groups.

- Self - esteem - normal human desire to be accepted and valued by others. People always compare themselves with others. They need respect of others, have status, fame, prestige, and attention.

- Self – actualization - this level of need pertains to what a person's full potential is and realizing that potential. Now, people don't have anybody to compare with, except their previous achievement, so they have to create a new potential to keep growing.

We can say that these are pushing forces that lead our behavior on the way to achieve our goals. It's really easy to think or speak about what you're going to do, but actually doing what you say takes commitment. So, we need something to make us getting into action... Motivation! It can be emotion, mood, ambitions, event, other people, material comforts ... for each person it's something different.

First, there are internal stimuli like needs, beliefs, emotions and mood. The mood is a state of being, which is created and affected by biochemical (hormones, energy levels, lack of sleep) and psychological (how we perceive and react to the things that happen to us) factors. There are unique for everybody. There are in your mind, only you know what's going on there, but most of the time even you cannot explain them! In these thoughts we can make one main division – sexes. Or how sex differences can affect motivation? Of course, this is common conclusion and there are exceptions from it!

People are saying “Clever girls, successful men!”. And I'm totally agreed with this! Women can be better at exams, more disciplined, accurate at their work, but men are paid more and there are more of them on the top positions. Women are more other – focused. They like to speak about feeling, people and gossips. If they have a problem (which is most of the time), they are looking for empathy. Or they think that “a problem shared, is a problem halved”. While men are more focused on objects and actions. They express their emotions through actions (not words). For them “a problem shared is one to be solved”. They are looking for solution and support by doing actions. We can find a difference and when we speak about being self-critical. With no doubt men can confess if they've made a mistake. Most of them are not trying to search the reason for their fail, but they are trying to find out what's not working correctly and what could be done. While women, as I said, are more other – focused. They can always put the blame on someone else; they can always judge the others, but not themselves. They can analyse the past a hundred of times looking for the reason for their fail, instead of moving on.

That was division of human – beings into two main types – men and women. But in the society people are divided by their social status. Social status is the honor or prestige attached to one's position in society. One can earn their social status by their own achievements, which is known as achieved status. As I mentioned we don't leave in a vacuum. That means everything you do reflects somehow to the others and

other's actions also have a reflection on you, your behavior, your well-being. People do not satisfy their needs, perform meaningful tasks or achieve challenging goals only by themselves and only for themselves. No, people always look around. They compare themselves with others to see whether rewards they are getting are fair enough or are unfair. There are three possible ways – fair deal, motivating and de-motivating one. The fair deal is when person contribute the same as the others and he is getting as much as them. De-motivating deal is when you tend the same or even more, but you're getting less than comparable others. In that case – should we give up?!? Just leave the things as they are without any change?!? A lot of people are ready to do it – to live “dress rehearsals” because they cannot motivate themselves to achieve their dreams and ambitions. But can the others motivate you???

There are a lot of talented people who are just sitting, waiting and wasting their time. Somebody has to go and tell them “come on, you can do it ... we are with you ... go ahead ... just do it ... “. It's like a football ball that you have to kick first so it can move on. And like in the football game – every time somebody has to kick the ball and give it direction to move ahead. In the real life “the ball” is de-motivated person. We have to control (give him direction) him in the way we train puppies. It's poor, but it's true! And I think everybody at least ones has been in situation like this. It's like your body is switch off and somebody has to press the button and turn it on. Sometimes it can be a call from close to us person, playing favorite song or just story we heard and inspired us. Next time people have to entreat us a hundred of times till we give up and say: “Ok, I'll do it.”.

We are human-beings. We were born on this world and we try to survive till the end of our life. Every day is a “battle”. We are trying to satisfy our basic needs of hunger, thirst, sleep, sex. The same like the animals! But we are not animals because there are four more steps we have to make before we leave this planet (regarding to Maslow's theory). And each step we take is one “idea” closer to the final line. Of course, whoseever way we take it's not going to be easy. But as Lao Zi said : “A journey of a thousand miles starts with a single step.”. You just have to make it!

We don't have to be scared of setting a major goal. If we know where we want to go (have a goal), we just have to find the path to get there (be motivated). Or if we have a goal, we can achieve it. It will be easier if we first set some mini-goals. When we succeed at them, we will be more motivated to challenge the bigger ones. It looks like a process of building a house. You need the idea of what kind of house do you want to live in. Then you start putting on bricks – one by one, paint the walls, bring some furniture and ... you live in your own house, you achieve your goal!

One of the ways to achieve your aim is to be concentrated on it. Thinking about it, about the steps you have to take, about the moves you have to make is always helpful. Thereby increase a possibility the aim to happen. The process is similar with the process of growing flowers. If you are taking a good care of them, they will grow; otherwise they will die.

You can do it only if you really want to do it and believe in this! People say that “We become what we think about all day”. In other words – never stop dreaming!!!

Dreams can be also a motivator. If we have the clear idea about them you have to pluck it out of the inspiration clouds and bring it to the earth, where it can be real. People who are focused on their goal have a bigger chance to achieve them. Those with a vision and idea about their life have the ability to control their destiny and lifestyle. And those with no ideas are led by the others! When your thoughts are occupied from the goal you have, when you really want it to happen - then it will happen. People, who are concentrated on their own existence and future, have a bigger chance to succeed. When you are focused on the others – friends, people from your university, co-workers, people who you don't know, some profiles of some people ... you are spending your energy and time about them. I don't want to be misunderstood. You have to take care of your family, you have to respect your friends, you have to help other people ... and you will be "a great man" if you can do all! I'm sorry to say, but we live in a society which is other-focused. Today it is more important what the others are doing and what they have. People are "dying" to know all details about others' life. Of course, there is nothing bad if you see the success of the others, see what they achieve and how they do it. You can try to "plug it in into your life", you can learn experience of life or you can see and try not to repeat mistakes of the others. Unfortunately, just a few people can do this and they are really doing it. The rest are poking their noses into other people's affairs. Instead of taking good examples, they are ready to "blame" the others for their success.

When we speak about motivation, we have to mention and the organizations. Or how motivated are the people about their job? Less or more, all or nothing ... There are people who really love their jobs. They wake up in the morning, drink a coffee and go to work. They do all this with excitement. What motivate them? Maybe they find the job that satisfies their needs, they do it with pleasure and feel glad of the rewards they take. And when I say rewards, I don't mean only pay-checks they get. There are more important things than money, new car you've got or expensive clothes you're buying. Things like feel satisfied from what you are doing for you and for others, inner growth. If I have to give an example for people who love their professions, it would be – artists, artists, artists! To be an artist it's not only to paint, to play in the theater, to sing, to write novels ... it's to be creative! To have an imagination to do the things!

And what about the other people – those, who don't like their job or who are not motivated enough? Here comes the role of managers. These are people who are paid regarding to what their employees are doing. In case something is going wrong managers are the people who have to find out how to fix the problem. They have to motivate their employees as offer them better conditions of work, different bonuses, reward for their well-done job.

The companies live and die with their workers. They rely on them and exist because of them. It doesn't matter if it is a big or small one, in which country it is situated or what kind of products have. You like a manager, owner or director have to know how to motivate your subordinates. Each employee has to feel himself like an individual in a great team; to know that his job is significant for the company. If he is satisfied and well motivated, then he will be more productive and creative.

There are a lot of theories and books with topics “How to motivate a group”, “Employee motivation”, etc, where you can read about motivation at a workplace. But we cannot say which one is the right formula. Employees are also human-beings and that means that their behavior is complex. If you use one strategy on two different people, they are going to act in two different ways. So we can say it again – there is no one strategy or theory that can apply to everyone! But speaking about organizations, there is one thing that is valid every time with no doubt – you have to train your employee in the way you train your puppy – “Jump and I’ll give you a biscuit.”. But in our case the biscuit are the money. Unfortunately we live in mercantile society where “money” are the answer of the question “what do you need?”. Or in other words, it’s easy to motivate people – just give them money. Yes, money are important because they can motivate you to attain other goals. But it’s pity when money are a Goal for some people!

There are others things (except money) such as meaningfulness, freedom of choice, love and be loved ... but for how many of us these are important things??? Just a few! Less and less people are thinking about who we really are, what we have to do to change for the better, how we can help the others to find themselves ... maybe as the world is globalizing, people are getting more and more individuals !!!

The theory says: “as individuals we are capable of setting goals”. Motivation is explained as force which causes people to act direct behavior to the attainment of specific goals. But how are the things in the real life??! How of us are really motivated to do something? How of us wake up every morning with the idea – I know what’s going next? Not much! Lots of us don’t know who we are; don’t have clear idea about their future, and even don’t pay so much attention to this. We are trying to clarify our images through what we consume – food we eat; movies we watch; music we listen; places we visit ... I don’t know why but for people today it’s really important to be like the others. Can this be a motivator – “I want to be like you”? How far we can go in our ambition to be anybody else? Who knows ...

Living in these years, people are influenced from everywhere. If I was writing this 15-20 years ago, I would probably say – people are influenced from the radio, newspapers, even books they read, social communication they have. But now, in 2010, there is only one thing – internet! Everything that you want you can find it there – read the latest news, make friendships, “visit” exotic places (with google earth for example), pay our bills, order food, ... actually you can do everything there, except taking a shower maybe ... People are so addicted to it, that they forget about simple things in the life. One walk in the park, make a picnic on Sunday afternoon, smile at someone even who you don’t know ... Now there are others values – what kind of self-phone do have, how much did you pay for the last dress you had bought, how many people are your friends in facebook ... Sad, but true! People are so faddish about the others – how they look like, where were they last night, what they said or made ... that they forget about themselves in “the ambition” to know everything about the others. But can the others motivate us??? Yep, they can. Just turn around you and see how the same are people. Everybody is trying to follow the example of somebody else –

Hollywood stars, models, famous singers and dancers. Of course, there's nothing bad in this when you want to be like them and try to do your best to realize "your dream". Poorly is when you want to look like them – with thin body, blond hair and blue eyes. Why somebody else has to tell us how we have to look like and how we have to behave. Why don't we simply be ourselves, with the good and the bad in us, with our fears and strength of will, with the idea about less violence and more smiling faces ...

We have to be able to motivate ourselves and others in the face of the unexpected. We need to pick up, dust down ourselves and resume the battle! Resilience and self-reliance have to be the order of the day!!! I don't think we need motivation to find motivation. Everything is inside us. We only have to look for it and let it be! It's not going to be easy because the life is an endless war for survival. Nothing is easy, so we have to give something from ourselves, to make sacrifices in our daily life and ... and hope that we'll succeed at the end!

"Impossible is just a big word thrown around by small men who find it easier to live in the world they've been given, than to explore the power they have to change it. Impossible is not a fact. It's an opinion. It's not a declaration. It's dare. It's potential, temporary nothing." So it's up to you what you gonna do with your life and how you are going to achieve your own well-being.